



CITY COUNCIL

Administrative Oversight and Land Use Committee

Monday, March 16, 2009
Meeting Report

Attendance: M. Baez, J. Waltman, S. Marmarou Chair

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 pm by S. Marmarou, Chair.

I. Interviews

Donna Glaze (reappointment – Reading Area Water Authority)

Mr. Marmarou described a recent issue with a constituent.

Mr. Marmarou noted the new member of the Authority has volunteered to review and update the by-laws. Ms. Glaze stated that this is very noble work.

Mr. Marmarou stated that currently there is no room for exception in the Authority by-laws. Ms. Glaze stated her belief that each situation must be addressed individually and the situation must be made right. She agreed with the need to review the by-laws.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Ms. Glaze's contribution to the Authority. Ms. Glaze stated that she was proactive in the need for the Authority to set goals. She stated her belief that billing issues need to be corrected and that the Authority has begun to work more closely with ARB. She stated that this has assisted in bringing in additional revenues and that the Authority is no longer in debt.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Ms. Glaze's position on people who may have conflicts of interest or bring other personal issues to Boards. Ms. Glaze noted the need for these issues to be investigated. She stated that Boards should not be used for personal gain. She stated her position in her career of not handling issues dealing with money to avoid these types of situations. She noted the need for clear guidelines and no favoritism.

Mr. Marmarou questioned Ms. Glaze's stance on leasing the water/sewer system. Ms. Glaze stated that it is difficult to predict the future and would be against a lease agreement. She stated that Reading is the only City in Pennsylvania to have a separate water/sewer Authority. She stated that the Authority cannot continue to rescue the City in its financial state. She noted her hope that future members have professional and business backgrounds to assist in sound decision-making.

The Administrative Oversight Committee wishes to deliberate on the reappointment of Donna Glaze.

Robert Reimer (reappointment – Shade Tree Commission)

Mr. Reimer noted that the Commission was dysfunctional when he was first appointed but it is now fully functional. Dave Ruyak and John Palmerton have been working to remove dead trees. He also noted their work trimming trees near the new security cameras for better visibility and in the downtown area trimming near street lights.

Mr. Waltman questioned if more trees would be planted. Mr. Reimer noted that 77 trees were planted in 2008 through the adopt-a-tree program. He also noted that some dead trees in City Park were replaced.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if Mr. Ruyak inspects trees which have had permits pulled for removal. Mr. Reimer stated that he does follow up.

Mr. Waltman questioned if staff can keep up with the needs of the City. Mr. Reimer stated that much more work is being done now than several years ago. However, with 19,000 trees the staff will never be caught up.

Mr. Reimer noted his attendance at a tree tender's course in the Philadelphia area. He noted his hope that this course could be offered in Reading for community groups to attend. He noted the Commission's work to "green" the City.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the reappointment of Mr. Reimer to the Shade Tree Commission.

Andrew Molteni (appointment – Environmental Advisory Council)

Mr. Marmarou noted the need for more people on this committee. Mr. Molteni noted his difficulty finding qualified people who live in the City.

Ms. Baez questioned how long Mr. Molteni lived in Reading. Mr. Molteni noted that he has lived in Reading for 2 ½ years. He noted his love for Reading.

Mr. Marmarou again noted the need for more volunteers. Mr. Molteni noted his willingness to do research on City issues.

Mr. Marmarou noted that Council was currently addressing Bushong Mill Dam. Mr. Molteni noted the issue of who owns what and what the responsibilities of the owners are.

Ms. Katzenmoyer noted the next EAC meeting date and that Mr. Molteni would receive information via email.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the appointment of Mr. Molteni to the Environmental Advisory Council.

John Olson (appointment – Zoning Hearing Board)

Mr. Marmarou noted the amount of time this Board needs for meeting preparation.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the background of Mr. Olson. Mr. Olson noted his past work with the Electrician's Examination Board. He stated that he resigned from this Board after becoming employed as an electrician with the City of Reading. As he is no longer employed by the City, he noted his desire to remain active in City issues.

Mr. Waltman questioned Mr. Olson's interest in this Board. Mr. Olson noted that people are abusing the City and his hope to make a difference.

Mr. Waltman noted the balance needed to use restraint and still move the City forward. Mr. Olson noted that he is a fair man and has the ability to look at the big picture. He noted that his construction background and City experience will assist in his decision-making.

Ms. Katzenmoyer questioned Mr. Olson's willingness to attend classes and educate himself on zoning issues. Mr. Olson noted he is very willing to attend classes.

Mr. Olson questioned when the next meeting would be held. Ms. Katzenmoyer provided this information.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the appointment of Mr. Olson to the Zoning Hearing Board.

Thomas Fox (reappointment – Zoning Hearing Board)

Mr. Waltman questioned the big issues facing the Board at this time. Mr. Fox noted that he is representing the Zoning Hearing Board on the Zoning Amendment Committee. He stated that a big issue at this time is in-home daycare centers. He noted his hope that the consultant will make

daycare regulations that are within the law but are as restricted as possible. He noted his hope that a limit would be set. He stated that he would like to vote negatively for daycares more often but a lawful reason cannot be found. He also stated that applicants often lie on their applications and at Board hearings. Mr. Fox noted that Mr. Gattone has recently gone through training which noted that the daycare should receive zoning approval before the BCIU and State licensing approvals. Mr. Price is currently researching this issue. He noted that the Board does not always get all the necessary information needed to make a decision and the decision can then be faulty. He also noted that testimony from neighbors weighs heavily with the Board.

Mr. Fox also noted an issue with the Reading School District. The Board has been notified that the district purchased an 18 foot electronic sign to replace the signboard in front of the Geigle Complex. He noted his hope to discuss this issue with the consultant.

The Administrative Oversight Committee agreed to recommend the reappointment of Mr. Fox to the Zoning Hearing Board.

The Administrative Oversight Committee adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Shelly Katzenmoyer,
Deputy City Clerk